

Lake Oswego

United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming, Earthwise, Just Peace Congregation

No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!

1111 SW Country Club Road, Lake Oswego, OR 97034 503.635.4348

God is still
speaking.

November 9, 2023

Dear LOUCC Members and Friends,

Because of you, our church changes lives. Because of you, people in our congregation and our wider community find hope, tools, and faith to navigate the challenges of our world. Because of you, our children experience messages of God's unconditional love, building their sense of self and service. Because of you, our siblings in metro Portland have food to eat and shelter to call home. Because of you, we are a church committed to "Nurturing Spirit, Story, and Service." Here are some of the ways we hope to grow in faith and share God's love in the coming year:

Together, we want to nurture our connections to the Spirit. As we continue to face the crises of war, pandemic, poverty, racism, political division, as well as the personal crises in our lives, our connection to the Spirit matters. Grounding ourselves, individually and communally, in God's love anchors us in times of struggle, calms us in times of fear, and emboldens us to see our interconnection with all of creation. This year we want to nurture our connections to the Spirit by expanding our experiences of contemplative practices in worship and small groups. Through silence, prayer, music, and guided practices, we will create opportunities for connection, meaning-making, and discernment as we listen to Spirit. Through church school and teen class, we will help our children grow in their practices of mindfulness and connection to faith. Through upgrades to our building, we will create spaces of safety and sanctuary in our facilities and grounds so members of our congregation and the wider community can connect to God or their higher power. In this way, we can grow in faith and provide tools to navigate change.

Together, we want to nurture stories—the stories of one another, our land, our history, and our wider community. In the wake of COVID, we continue to reconnect with each other, welcoming new members and re-membering those we haven't seen in a while. This year, we plan to provide monthly fellowship gatherings—potlucks and pancake breakfasts—where we eat together and get to know each other better. In worship we will create space for people to share stories of their experiences with God, with generosity, and with service, sharing their gifts with the community. We will listen to our land, as we steward our grounds, plant native species, and provide a model of earth care for other churches. We will nurture stories from our past and our present, listening to our ancestors, elders, and those in our wider community, as we seek wisdom for how God is calling us to be the church in the world today.

Together, we want to nurture service. We will continue to be a tithing-church, giving away 10% of our contributions to other organizations working for good in our world. We will remain steadfast in our commitments to antiracism, earth justice, LGBTQIA inclusion, immigration, and addressing houselessness, continuing our financial and volunteer involvement with Respond to Racism, the Lake Oswego Transitional Shelter Ministry, Operation Nightwatch, and the Interfaith Movement for

Immigrant Justice, while also listening for new ways God is calling us. We also plan to move forward in creating gender neutral bathrooms in our church, ensuring all our members and guests feel welcome and safe.

These are just a few of our dreams and visions for the coming year, and because of you, all of these ministries are possible! Your generosity of time, talent, and treasure allow us to be the church and to nurture Spirit, story, and service in our world today.

Enclosed is a copy of our 2024 Narrative Budget, which describes some of the ways we hope to “Nurture Spirit, Story, and Service.” To accomplish all of our dreams, we will need to raise \$371,696, a 13% increase over our 2023 budget. These additional funds will cover salary increases for our hardworking staff, facility improvements for the safety and inclusion of all our members and guests, connections events for our congregation, and additional programming for our church teams. You can find a video of Treasurer Amy Oh presenting our 2024 Narrative Budget at www.loucc.org/2024generosity.

Please prayerfully consider how God is inviting you to be part of “Nurturing Spirit, Story, and Service.” Then complete and return the enclosed commitment card (or the online version) by November 19, when we will dedicate our gifts in worship.

Thank you so much for your generosity. Because of you, we are blessed, and in turn, we are a blessing to others!

With gratitude,

Rev. Jennie E. Ott
Pastor